



Adult Ed Summer Classes Cut

Decision Blamed on Ongoing Budget Woes

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Only a few months removed from deciding to convert several of their long-time Continuing Education offerings from free to fee-based, Santa Barbara City College administrators ended widespread community speculation this week by announcing that a majority of their Adult Education summer semester courses will be cancelled. Explaining the decision as a nasty side effect of ongoing state budget problems, Continuing Education Vice-President Dr. Ofelia Arellano confirmed the class cancellation rumors this week while also saying that “a limited number of certain fee-based course offerings will remain” in place when the summer semester starts on June 14. Though she couldn’t say which classes would go ahead as planned, she did explain that the survivors would be classes that students need for completing certificate programs and diploma requirements, as well as fee-based things like yoga, foreign languages, and assorted cooking classes. “Directors are still finalizing which classes will be offered, and we should have that information on our Web site by June 1 or very soon after,” concluded Arellano.

Interestingly enough, the announcement comes as various student- and faculty-filled stakeholder groups, such as the newly formed and SBCC-recognized Association of Continuing Education Students (ACES, the first of its kind for adult education student populations in the state) and the Continuing Education Instructors Association, cry foul about the transparency of the decision-making process. Less than convinced by the school’s explanation that a projected \$2.6-million budget shortfall has it once again needing to make cuts and disheartened by the recent suspension of the Continuing Education Advisory Committee (a faculty, student, and administration group that was convened last year as news broke about planned cuts and rate hikes for adult education), the ACES group, echoing concerns that many students and teachers had in the months leading up to last winter’s contentious free-to-fee decisions, issued its first official statement earlier this week: “The community has a right to be intimately involved in determining the needs of the College. The College Administration does not have the right to dictate or determine the goals of the Community College without due process and due diligence.” To that end, the group is planning on taking their requests for a more public and inclusive dialogue, including the reinstatement of the Advisory Committee, to SBCC’s Board of Trustees meeting on May 27 when Adult Ed-related items are slated to be discussed.

On the bright side, according to Arellano, thanks in large part to the summer cancellations, the school should be safe from having to cut any courses from its fall, winter, or spring catalogues. However, she added that more free courses would be converted in the coming months to a fee-based system.